



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Métis Nation–Saskatchewan expands early learning language efforts

**April 28, 2021** – Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) is proud to announce the expansion of its early learning language pilot projects across the province.

On the brink of extinction, Michif had less than 700 fluent speakers in Canada, making this irreplaceable pillar of Métis history at risk of being lost forever. Language is a vital part of identity. The Michif Early Learning Pilot Project (MELPP) and Dene Early Learning Pilot Project (DELPP) are significant and unprecedented steps in preserving Métis culture. Announced as a two-year pilot project in September 2020, MELPP and DELPP recognized that implementing traditional language into education at an early age would be paramount to its preservation.

Thanks to the foresight of these projects, today, over 130 kindergarten and pre-kindergarten students are learning Michif and Dene. The response has been overwhelming, with enthusiastic and staunch support from students, families and educators.

MN–S Education Minister Dr. Earl Cook said, “We see the images of the smiling young faces engaged in the learning of our language, and we can’t help but light up. This program was introduced to help preserve Michif and Dene languages and encourage a whole new generation of speakers and educators. In just seven short months, we have surpassed expectations.”

In the 2021-2022 school year Dene language learning will continue for a second year through Northern Lights School Division in La Loche. The Michif pilot project will continue at Regina Public Schools, Regina Catholic Schools, Saskatoon Public Schools, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and Rossignol Elementary in Île-à-la-Crosse. Joining the Michif language pilot project in the fall are four additional school divisions; Prairie Spirit, Saskatchewan Rivers in Prince Albert and area, Prince Albert Catholic School Division and Northwest School Division in the Meadow Lake region.

A successful start through education is paramount to early learning development. Often, children with a strong cultural identity and respect for multiple languages and cultures have increased academic success.



MN–S is proud to provide this unique and important opportunity to students. The success of MELPP and DELPP is shared among all Métis and Indigenous peoples as our traditional ways are honoured, our languages preserved and our right to educate our citizens recognized and respected.

Incorporating the revitalization of language into curriculums across the province is an important step toward protecting and fostering the Métis way of life, a historic and enduring priority of MN–S. MN–S looks forward to continued leadership in language teaching and revitalization.

This initiative is part of a broader partnership between MN–S and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society to revitalise Michif and Dene language within the Province. We will continue this important work together to protect, promote, and practice language preservation.

Under the guidance of teachers, Elders and Language Keepers, this program will connect children with Métis culture and immersion in full-day Michif and Dene language programs.

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**About Métis Nation–Saskatchewan:**

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN–S) is the Government for Métis citizens in the province of Saskatchewan. MN–S represents the political, socioeconomic, cultural and educational interests of some 80,000 Métis through an elected representative system consisting of an Executive, 12 Regions and approximately 132 Locals.

Social Media Links: @MNSask, @Métisnationsask

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